

The Alpha.

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**Human Rights before all Laws and Constitutions.—Gerrit Smith.
The Divine Right of Every Child to be Well Born.**

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NO. 3.

HEREDITY.

If every parent of to-day would study and profit by the revelations of heredity, the next generation would present humanity transformed and almost glorified. Why should such truths not be openly treated? Why must coarse jest, and sly hint, and curious and voluptuous thought run riot over a certain class of subjects, in themselves pure, while honest truth is covered with shame and mystery, or banished to dark corners? It is due to the almost total ignorance of men and women as to the laws of being that the flood-tide of sin and misery, known to every physician, has poured over the race. It is due to the wicked deceptions practiced upon the curious minds of children that the baleful power of half-truth and utter vulgarity takes such hold upon our youth.

Are children mysterious? Do you marvel that some good people should have such bad children, or that some indifferent people should have good children? Do you wonder at the weak mind, the diseased or delicate body, the melancholy or malicious or licentious trait, the love of drink, or the obstinate predilection for a certain pursuit? Let me quote one incident and leave the rest to the earnest thought of Christian women:

A certain rough, uncouth family had in it one daughter, who was a striking contrast to the rest—pretty, gentle, refined, book-loving. Mrs. Kirby inquired very closely into the reason of this contrast. The old mother knew of none. In the months before this daughter came they were living down South in a rude cabin. She could recall no refining or cheering circumstance, except that a peddler had called with a pack of books. The poor mother saw one pretty volume in green and gold which attracted her admiration. It was Scott's "Lady of the Lake." A keen desire for it possessed her, but the dollar was too much to spend. However, such was her longing for it the rest of the day and night that she rose from her bed, walked four miles to the village, roused the peddler, bought the book, and came home happy as a child. Through all that summer she read and committed to memory the beautiful, musical tale. It appeared to her she was with those people by the lakes in the mountains. She saw "Ellen" stepping about so sweetly in the rhyme; it seemed to her it was all true, especially after she could repeat it to herself. This was the explanation. The babe came to this world bearing on its delicate brain, and even on its little face the impression of the beautiful images which had filled the mother's thoughts.

We could multiply instances of peculiar development of mind and body, of musical or other special talent, of sweetness or strength or piety of disposition in the children, resulting directly from the *temporary* efforts of the mother to direct her mind in these channels. And the opposites of these result with equally startling certainty from her moods and impressions.

The great problem of the church is how to reach and save those who are held in chains to some over-mastering appetite of sin, and those whose deliberate free-will seems to elect for evil. O, mothers, and, secondarily, fathers, you hold the keys of these eternal issues! You can bequeath a disposition of a free-will that will turn to God and righteousness as the needle to the pole.

"To fashion an infinite soul and send it forth on an infinite career—infinite susceptibilities laid open to the touch of infinite sorrow—oh! to him who has ever faced the facts of being—not death, not death, but this irrevocable gift of life is the one solemnity, the awful sacrament!"

A mother may mould the plastic atom of life into a saint or poet, or at least, into a strong and good human being; but she must prepare for it as an artist studies for a picture or an athlete trains for the race. In this pure temple must come no tread of fiery-footed passion. While the vital clay lies under her moulding hand she must be pure as a vestal and free as Diana. She must keep sweet and calm, and drink in strength from the blessed air and sunshine; she must have a reasonable degree of health and happiness, a good mind and a devoted soul; she must be enlightened as to the laws of health and being, and she must yield herself to the influences of the Holy Spirit. Inspiration itself acknowledges these principles; see Judges, xiii: 4, and Matthew, i: 25.

Parentage must be lifted out of the depths of chance and animalism into the region of wise, calm, pure thought and election. In this realm the mother must be a free woman and a crowned queen; and the father must himself be pure from physical and spiritual taint. An ignoble progeny is the sequence of an enslaved motherhood. From a motherhood crippled, tortured, exhausted, oppressed, debased, can come nothing worthy the likeness of God.

Oh! for a pen of fire to set before men the record of the agony and the defilement they have for centuries of ignorant selfishness poured out upon womanhood and childhood! They would fall sick and blinded in the dust, and writhe there for very misery of remorse. Even

many good men in their not-exonorable blindness are verily guilty in this matter. When shall the healing branch be cast into this black and bitter fountain that is poisoning so many lives?

Jean Ingelow, in her poem of "Margaret by the Mere Side," tells, in her own sweet, dreamy fashion, the story of a fair girl—a woman in years, but dumb and always to be a child in intellect—who sat hour by hour, and day by day, "on the gray stone beneath the eavesmore," innocent, wistful, sad, always waiting, always gazing down the mere. Her mother had come there a six-months' bride, to see her husband's boat go down the stream never to return.

"And she with weeping sore
Peered in the water-flage unceasingly.
* * * *
And, after, desolate she sat alone,
And mourned, refusing to be comforted.
On the gray stone—the moon-embroidered stone;
Till, when the days grew short, a child was born
To the dead father underneath the wave."

A child whose dumb, pensive soul was, by the subtle sympathy of nature, to be stamped for life with a grief she never knew.

Look at another picture from Miss Philp's "Silent Partner," a scene in the pinched, worn, driven life of New England factory girls. Catty—poor, deaf, dumb, repulsive Catty—had fallen asleep. "Her long fingers moved a little, framing broken words. Even in her dreams, she listened for what she never heard, and spoke that which no one understood.

"Mother used to say," said Sip, under her breath, "that it was the noise."

"The noise?"

"The noise of the wheels. She said they beat about in her head. She came home of nights and says to herself, 'The baby'll never hear in this world, unless she hears the wheels,' and, sure enough, Sip lifted her face to Perley's with a look of awe, 'it is true enough, that Catty hears the wheels, but never anything beside!'"

Cowan and Mrs. Duffey, and Joseph Cook, in his grand, brave way, will tell us of scores of wonders like this, but let us take just one scene from Mrs. Kirby's "Transmission."

We see a young wife stung and tortured by the daily desertion and faithlessness of her husband. We see her patiently, bravely, resolutely, turning away from the sight and feeling of this torment. We see her—and we think she must have asked Heaven's help—constantly and firmly putting aside and treading down every burning thought, every vengeful feeling. She did this not for herself, but for the sake of the innocent soul which she knew would reflect her own. She had her reward in one who grew up before her, pure, sweet, strong, and calm. She had lifted him above dark and petty things into the bright, free atmosphere of great souls.

When will the awful significance of these things dawn upon men and women? When shall the ideal mother come to her high vocation, carefully and reverently, as an artist comes to her marbles, clothed with strength, dowered with wisdom, and baptized with purity and love? When shall she be upheld and comforted by a husband as pure, as reverent as herself?

Do we see all the meaning of Miss Philp's ideal marriage? "With her he is a crowned creature; with him she is a free one." Husband of today, do you not see that as soon as you enslave this free creature your own royalty, and that of your children, is gone? So sure as you bind her down upon the altar of your own lower nature there shall creep forth, out of the ashes of sacrifice womanhood, a swarm of evil creatures—shapes of hate and pain and lust—that shall look at you and reproach you, out of the eyes of your children.

M. L. G.

IN REGARD TO THE NATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION.

If any arguments were needed to prove the imperative necessity for such an organization of our benevolent forces as is attempted by the Women's National Relief Association, and its Blue Anchor Auxiliaries, it is to be found in the events of the past season.

Had our organization been perfected and an auxiliary existed in each State, with minor societies tributary to it in every county and town, how easily might we have met, almost at once, the necessities of the Michigan sufferers. In this case the State association, and its branches, would have been the first to send relief, and it would have been the privilege of that auxiliary to make known at once the necessities of the occasion and call for whatever was requisite to supply them from the national head.

The American people are cheerful and generous givers, and they would not be any the less responsive to the cry of the suffering for knowing that they had at hand responsible almoners, and the speediest, possible, and least expensive methods of distributing their bounty. It must be plain to any reflecting mind how greatly such systematized preparation for times of disaster or pestilence would facilitate the collection and distribution of relief. Not only would money, clothing, and restoratives more speedily and inexpensively reach their destination than under the loose methods which are now necessarily employed, but ambulances and their equipments, nurses and physicians, belonging to the association would be always in instant readiness for service.

In making our organization known, and urging its extension until its ramifications extend to the remotest portions of our great country, we desire to be understood that this is the first actual attempt to make in this country a permanent organization of this sort. Others had talked of it. In 1876 at the close of the Centennial, ladies interested in the women's department of the exposition, and a number of philanthropic gentlemen proposed a somewhat similar association for benevolent purposes. But a question arose regarding the ensign under which they should work. Some persons proposed the red cross, but it was rejected on the ground that we were of sufficient national importance to have a distinctive badge, and to act independently of any other nation; while it was at the same time cordially conceded that in times of foreign or international need arising from war the American society would, in event of governmental recognition of the Geneva treaty, act with the foreign association, the ensign of which is the red

cross. A large and influential class of citizens represented at the meeting referred to, were then and are still, opposed to that sign from religious scruples. The attempt to organize was abandoned for the time, and no further organization was undertaken until in the autumn of 1830 when this association organized and began its work. It has chosen the sign Blue Anchor, the emblem of hope linked indissolubly with faith and charity, in commemoration of the first practical benevolence it engaged in, viz: the relief and succor of persons rescued, by our life-saving crews, from shipwreck.

It is the plan of the association to be self-sustaining, and neither to pay its officers salaries nor to solicit appropriations from Government. It believes that one great source and means of corruption in many of the so-called benevolent organizations is the handling of "appropriations" for which exact accounts are not required, and for the discreet and equitable use of which no one is held responsible. The association aims like the German *Frauenverein* to acknowledge and account for every dollar of its receipts. The books are carefully audited; and donors are to be satisfied that their gifts are neither wasted, nor in any way diverted from the purposes for which they were given.

It is earnestly urged upon every person who reads this, that they take up this good work, and with energy and devotion, assist in spreading the humane idea, and promoting its practical expression in the formation of auxiliary associations in their respective towns, counties, and States. There is no village, however small, that cannot contribute to this good work. There is always some room which can be used for the storage and proper care of material prepared and contributed for the specified purposes of the society. There are always women of executive ability and unimpeachable integrity in every community ready and willing to enter into any good work that commends itself to the common sense and benevolence of the people. There are women who are holding out their hands and lifting up their hearts to God asking for work that will do something, ever so little even to mitigate human suffering. Here is a way opened. Individual benevolence can do so little. Combined effort can accomplish almost everything.

COITION IN PREGNANCY.

BY THEOPHILUS PARRIN, M. D., LL. D., PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS AND THE MEDICAL AND SURGICAL DISEASES OF WOMEN, MEDICAL COLLEGE OF INDIANA.

[From the *Medical Practitioner*, July, 1881.]

Undoubtedly abstinence from coition, once the design of this function has been accomplished, is the law of nature. Ought the human race to accept this law as governing its action?

Recent obstetric writers are generally silent upon the question. Occasionally some half-breed, writing medicine for the mass, sustains the negative, often qualifying the permission to indulge with certain cautions; but upon the whole there seems a tacit consent for the laity to settle the question as, guided by wise reason and kind sympathy on the one hand, or by blind in-

stinct and ungoverned passion on the other, they choose. Yet our great master Hippocrates thought that pregnant women who abstained from coition had easier labors; Galen dwelt upon the liability to abortion from this cause at certain periods of pregnancy, the fruit more easily detached when more tender, and when approaching maturity, so that the Christian Fathers had good authority for their injunction of continence in the early part and toward the end of pregnancy.

The fact that abstinence from sexual congress in pregnancy is the common rule of animals is certainly a strong argument in favor of urging similar abstinence on the part of men. In addition it may be truthfully asserted that the pregnant woman has as little desire for coition as pregnant females of lower orders; nay, oftentimes abhor, while submitting, for she is less protected by power of escape.

Furthermore, practitioners are sometimes told by innocent husbands—more rarely by wives who so often suffer in silence—that intercourse causes the latter great pain.

Finally, this is a frequent cause of abortion; at least one-half of the causes of what is termed spontaneous abortion probably are thus produced. Summing up the arguments in the affirmative of the question, it may be stated that coition in pregnancy is unnatural; so far as woman is concerned, it is generally odious, often painful, and in regard to the newly-created being frequently murderous.

What can be alleged on the other side? The peace of families and the chastity of husbands are secured by the indulgence. But suppose men were trained to believe that such indulgence is wrong, injurious to others and to themselves, would their amiability and chastity require to be purchased by a momentary pleasure? Would they not rather learn to subdue and rule this otherwise imperious passion? If Newton, Kant, Fontanelle and Beethoven could live their many honored years with no indulgence of sexual passion surely other men might abstain a few months without injury.

The ungoverned passion of man is prolific of evil, and, like producing like, the father who has never learned self-control may give his son not only form and feature, but the germ of the same fierce, clamorous desire, which in its full development will prove a heritage of woe to that son and others. That which polite language veils under the designation, social evil, and which desolates so many happy homes and brings its quick, black harvest of misery, remorse, disease and death, chiefly lives because man does not know aright, does not duly reverence and honor woman, and keep in subjection that which may become one of the monster passions in his heart, and is thus continued from generation to generation.

Surely prospective motherhood, woman within whom proceeds the evolution of the marvelous mysteries of creation, should be revered, is worthy of all thoughtful consideration, and ought to have thrown around her all protective care. The woman who has conceived is *enceinte*; that is, ungirdled—in allusion to the ancient custom of laying aside the girdle when pregnant and placing it in the temple of the gods—at once a prepara-

tion for the enlargement of the abdomen and a seeking of divine protection. Let her not fail of all human care while in this condition.

Nature then offers unto man invitation and opportunity to subordinate passion to reason, to conscience, to will, to a higher love, and thus raise himself above himself.

A sensual age claims for coition facilitating participation, and the most sensual of husbands finding their wives pregnant very much against their wishes and in spite of conjugal onanism will claim that they can now indulge freely and without fear, for matters can be no worse!

We do believe that intercourse in pregnancy has nothing to commend, nothing to excuse itself up to wise men, and that virtuous abstinence on the part of the husband will be a blessing both to him and to his wife and to their posterity. It may be objected that the abstinence here advocated contradicts almost universal practice, a practice that frequently brings no evil. But how do we know it has no injurious results? Admitting that the wife may in the majority of cases not patently suffer, have no miscarriage, no pain, no nausea and vomiting increased or excited thereby—is there no violence done to the finer elements of a refined womanly nature? Does such a woman cheerfully accept it as the way of all, like Hiero's wife who never perceived her husband's offensive breath, imagining that it was common to all men? It seems that there might follow some lessening of mutual love, respect and reverence.

So far as the husband is concerned he learns no lessons of self-control, attains no self-mastery in this regard, and mars that ideal manhood which, in better hours and with nobler aspirations, he seeks to attain.

As to the other objection, no matter how universal a practice is if it be wrong at least endeavor to point out the wrong. Whether I judge from observation, from the great doctrine of evolution which so fascinates the age, or from the power of divinely-revealed truth, the conclusion always is that the world grows better, and that a wiser, higher, happier, nobler generation will one day possess the earth. Each evil pointed out, each wrong discovered helps the progress to that day, although it may be long before the evil and the wrong cease. Meantime it is a great mistake to accept a popular vote as the criterion of wisdom and right. Possibly physicians are too reticent in regard to sexual relations; do not consider as fully as they ought the connection of these with human health and happiness, and give that instruction to the people which is so much needed in regard to such relations. Believing this, I can say, in the words of Montaigne, "I know very well that few will quarrel with the license of my writings who have not more to quarrel with in the license of their own thoughts."

This may be the voice of one crying in the wilderness; even in the wilderness many heard. If only truth be uttered it will be heard and heeded by some, and when heard and heeded will multiply itself a thousand-fold.

THE worst education that teaches self-denial is better than the best that teaches everything else, and not that.—*John Sterling.*

A. SWER TO SEXUAL CONTINENCE.

We publish below some notes called out by the article published last month on "Sexual Continence," from Dr. D. S. Lamb, A. A. Surgeon, U. S. A., and professor of anatomy at Howard Medical College, Washington, D. C.:

In a minimum number of cases, married couples find obstacles to reproduction; sometimes inseparable, at others temporary and removable. In the former case, if the rule of *restriction to reproduction* be followed, the parties, upon ascertaining their impotency, must thenceforth refrain from the sexual act.

In the case where the obstacle to reproduction is temporary or removable, the repetition of the act would have to be governed by the nature of the obstacle. Medical or surgical treatment would, of course, be the indication, with a view to prepare the way for renewed sexual commerce, having reproduction as its purpose.

What is there surely gained by the *reproduction restriction* theory over a theory such as follows:

Assuming that there is nothing degrading in the act, *per se*, but that the intention points out the moral character, and that the intention is *present gratification*, irrespective of reproduction, I note, that if we take only such food or such drinks, or wear such clothing as is absolutely necessary for us, and no more, and that everything beyond the necessity point is a *mistake* and a *wrong*, then is every one guilty. The flowers that deck our gardens are then a mistake and a wrong.

Sexual commerce is an act embodying in most cases a possibility of *reproduction*, and, in so far, is of the highest importance, not to be entered into without careful consideration. The anticipated pleasure to the act must be subordinated to the following:

The parties ought to be lawfully united. It would seem to be entirely unnecessary to argue this point. Society rests for its stability thereupon. Both parties should be willing. As a matter of fact, the unwillingness, when it exists, usually rests with the woman. I know, however, and probably all know of one or more cases in which the unwillingness is upon the part of the man. They should be willing to have children, if such should result. There should be no mental weakness following the act. There should be no bodily weakness following the act. The act should not be performed with vehemence and wrongful passion. There should be temperateness, else the child, product of the act, may bear a vehement, over-wrought, passionate nature. "Like father like son."

Keeping in mind these principles, of course, sexual commerce would be comparatively infrequent. Because, first, there is a wide-spread unwillingness upon the part of married couples to increase their families, and all sorts of methods are employed to avoid the increase without interfering with sexual commerce. I cannot look upon these methods in any other way than as unjustifiable.

In the second place, the unwillingness of one party, usually the wife, is a very common occurrence. The fear of pregnancy often makes her *submit* to her husband's advances.

There should be no such submission. It is *unjust* to her, unfair, inconsiderate, to be deplored and condemned.

Quite frequently, also, there is a mental or physical weakness in both for it, most commonly by the woman. It is questionable if one is ever justified in doing anything which makes him or her weaker in mind or body than beforehand.

To go back to the cases of temporary or permanent obstacles to reproduction, why should the parties refrain entirely from the sexual act because they are incapable of reproduction. Suppose their married life covers thirty to forty years. Suppose that the act itself has no hurtful effect upon them, what do they gain by total abstinence? What do they lose by occasional commerce?

The writer goes on to say that there are times when intercourse is:

1. *Healthful.*
2. Tends greatly to clearness of the mental perceptions and makes the intellect generally clear and correct.

3. Elevates the moral sentiments and wakens everything that is aesthetic in our natures.

Just how far this is true it is difficult to ascertain. I have no doubt it is true to a certain extent.

He further says: "There never was a person weak and debilitated sexually who enjoyed physical, mental, or moral good health."

This statement is very likely correct. It argues against allowing one's self to do anything which debilitates sexually.

To say "that chronic complaints have their origin in unhealthful or unnatural sexual condition" is, in my opinion, wide of the mark.

The writer believes that the sexual desire which disappears during convalescence from acute diseases is the cause of returning health. I think that he is here again wide of the mark. To me, the renewed desire is rather the result and indication of returning health.

Sexual desire is often enough entirely inconsistent with health. A man who has but recently had sexual commerce, and feels debilitated therefrom, will repeat the act again and again, still further reducing himself.

Consumption, too, at least consumptive men, are now seriously regarded as having strong sexual desire and disposition towards frequent coition and large families; which shows that the strongest of sexual desire does not bear a constant relation, by any means, to the standard of health.

It must not be forgotten that while it is true, but to what extent it is hard to say, that men in sound health usually have strong sexual desire, we know that such men may so occupy themselves with the activities of life as to forego for long intervals the sexual act. Nevertheless, when a period of relaxation comes, as usually does in the summer season, sexual desire is felt with greater frequency, partly from the absence of other occupation. This same thing is true of the pleasures of the table.

"A failure for a long time to exercise any capacity, let it be mental or muscular, is to insure a continually decreasing strength, and ultimately destroy the capacity altogether."

I think the writer will have to admit that unless one should sequester himself as a hermit, or be cast alone

upon an island, as Robinson Crusoe, it is impossible to segregate sexual feeling. No man can live a day scarcely in town, city, or hamlet during his period of sexual power without having his desire appealed to, with the effect of producing, in longer or shorter intervals, an involuntary if not voluntary emission of the seminal fluid. So that capacity has no opportunity to get lost. To my mind, the pity is that the writer is not correct, for all thoughtful people will agree that it would be very desirable to place some millions of people, criminals and paupers particularly, in such case as would shrivel their sexual powers to a minimum.

There is little support to the theory that the deprivation of sexual gratification in dogs produces madness. I would not deny that it might; but I think the criticism of Dolan, (1879,) after reviewing the literature, is just, that the facts do not sustain the theory.

Nowhere can it be said that deprivation of sexual gratification produces madness in the human subject, so far as the statistics of insane asylums would indicate. I know that if appetizing food is placed in the sight of a starving man, but beyond his reach, he may become insane. So if the object of sexual desire is constantly placed in exciting relation to a man of strong feeling and weak mind, and he excluded from sexual gratification, he might become insane; but such cases are rare enough. I know, too, that there are women with uterine or vaginal troubles, in whom at times there is a fury for sexual gratification. But this condition is emphatically a diseased one, and one too in which it is not sexual gratification which is needed as much as medical treatment.

HEREDITY OF GUITEAU—EXTRACT FROM "THE TWO WORLDS."

His divorced wife thinks the deed was prompted by a desire for notoriety, for which she believes he would give his life.

We think we have a hint of the true cause. The brain organization of the man is bad. It is small and poor. His whole life shows strange psychological phenomena. From childhood he has been erratic, and possessed little consecutiveness or moral sense, especially in relation to property rights of others. He became a constant source of trial and suffering to his relatives, and "an unabated nuisance" in society. The last crime was only the culmination of a long series of steps leading to it.

Where lies the cause? In the bad organization of the man. Where is the cause of this? His sister gives the answer, when she tells us that his mother suffered with brain fever before his birth. The man has thus had, by pre-natal influences, chronic or organic brain-fever all his life.

The recognition and study of the dual man—body and spirit—rightly deals with these questions. The spirit acts, as best it can, through the organism in which it is for the time incarnated. Highest, purest, best thoughts and actions—which are but spiritual manifestations—can only be given through the best brain development. The mental development is determined by

pre-natal conditions. He represents in his strange, sad life, the mental conditions of his mother. His spirit is in a badly-constructed machine, and must give erratic manifestations till by culture it shall be changed for the better. Under any conditions he will be peculiar; under many, dangerous. With a proper understanding of his case, and proper legislation, his friends could have restrained him in some reformatory institution, for development into better mental conditions, and thus have saved us present sorrow. Such will be the future treatment of all like him.

Under strong exciting causes, like the sting of wounded pride, and morbid desire for notoriety, taking advantage of political conditions, he becomes dangerous. Had he been rightly organized, no "spoil system" would have rendered the Presidential office dangerous.

With erratic natures like his, anything that arouses deep feeling may make them dangerous. Improved conditions, socially and politically, will of course lessen the danger from them. But, after all, the true reform, recognizing that while something must be done to protect society and enable the dangerous classes to outgrow those mental conditions that render them liable to crime, also sees that a study must be made of those underlying laws and conditions of pre-natal life, that shall prevent evil by giving every immortal spirit when incarnated in the flesh a harmonious brain and body, "a fit temple for the dwelling of the Holy Ghost."

It scarcely need be added that this just and humane view of the case will at once abate all feeling of vengeance toward this wretched assassin, the expression of which has too often disfigured the utterances of both the public press and the private citizen within the last few weeks. Vengeance has no place in a true philosophy of life.

H. H. BROWN.

PHYSICAL REDEMPTION.

When I read in THE ALPHA the article on the subject of "Sexual Redemption and Motherhood," the theme seemed to widen and grow till its dimensions were appalling. The depth, breadth, and height of the moral atmosphere to be analyzed, enlightened, and purified were enough to make the heart to faint, the hand to tremble, and the pen to fall, were it not for a few scattering rays of a dawning truth to guide, direct, and encourage.

This truth God has already given to the world as an integral part of it, or as the soul of it, to perfect and redeem it; and we are benefited, purified, and redeemed by its influence in proportion as the individual heart and head, or spiritual perception and intellect, are in unison sufficient to discern, grasp, hold, and formulate it, as the day and generation demand.

May not this present state of unrest be a condition of formulation of a new order? This seething of the mass of mind; this bubbling up of the great cauldron of all sects and parties, all reaching for something to rest and lean upon that will satisfy both head and heart, to a shrine of purity and fidelity to grace the family altar, where all may be clothed with new, clean, sweet flesh,

such as Christ and his maternity made possible for human attainment.

God operates and comes in immediate contact with matter, through the law of natural and divine forces, assimilating, as it were, the two worlds in one. We see God manifesting himself to us continually by his new creations. They greet us everywhere, in the vegetable, animal and human form; and the channel through which he operates and multiplies his presence to us is that which, in the constitution of matter, we call sex. Through it matter is utilized and vivified, and the unseen power takes on expression of form. The purely intelligent mind hails this as evidence of a mysterious power linking its existence and ultimating itself in shape and form as a new creation. Every blade of grass, every bud and flower, is a revelation of the unseen power, and every new creation in the animal kingdom is a marvel to us. But when we approach the human, where intelligence holds sway, what shall we say of creation, and what of human responsibility? Here the human and divine are brought face to face—the divine love and the human love. God walking in the garden of Eden, holding Adam and Eve responsible, and for what? For the purity of that divine love. And "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," comes to us with the same force and truth as it did to Adam and Eve.

If the divine law of God is violated in human creation, by the pure and holy love descending to mere passion, on a par with the physical appetite, such as the eating of an apple, it is death to the spiritual. The perversion must bring its condemnation, suffering and degradation.

For these thousands of years this violation and degradation—spiritual death—has been accumulating in the physical, till it is becoming a consuming fire; while the spiritualizing, holy love, that which purifies the human body, scarcely finds a resting place. Pure, true love must be nurtured and cultivated; truth and light must flow in, so that the prayer uttered so long ago, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," may be realized. This is the perfection Christ came to establish, and in his sermon on the mount he was very pointed in his practical instruction for regulating the laws of domestic life. He says: "It has been said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery;" and he then explains what he means by adultery, and recognizes the law of spirit, as well as that of physical. He continues by saying: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out," etc. The eye being the light of the body corresponds to love and the soul. But rather than offend its true mission, he would say, suppress its radiance and conserve it, lest an evil should come. "And if thy right hand offend thee," etc. The right hand corresponds to usefulness; and the use of love, in connection with the creative function, is to elevate and purify, that the divine may approach to sanctify. If the highest aspiration and love do not mutually exist in such union, cast the thought of such consummation from thee; better to lose one member than that the whole be cast into hell.

Continuing the subject, Christ says: "Whosoever shall

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Letters consisting of personal opinions should be not more than half column in length. Letters containing important facts or interesting matter may sometimes be longer.

All communications for the editor, books for review, &c., should be addressed to Caroline B. Winslow, Editor of "The Alpha," No. 1 Grant Place, Washington, D. C.

THE ALPHA.

VOL. VII. NOVEMBER 1, 1881. No. 3.

THERE will be a meeting of the Washington Moral Education Society, Saturday, November 12, at No. 1 Grant Place, 3 P. M. A prompt attendance of members and friends is requested.

By order of President: C. B. WINSLOW.

WE wish to call the attention of our readers to the article on "Coition in Pregnancy," by Dr. Parrin, who is unquestionable scientific authority, and a gentleman of refined moral and social qualities. His testimony is valuable on this momentous subject, as also is that of Dr. D. S. Lamb, who kindly lends the aid of his science, his pen and name to aid our good work.

A GREAT necessity overmasters our reluctance to make appeals for payments from our friends and subscribers. We have on our books several hundred names that have not prepaid their subscription for the coming year, and many that are in arrears one and two and more years. They have not discontinued the paper, and this presupposes they wish it continued, but have forgotten or neglected to pay for it. The sum is small to each individual, but the aggregation is a very serious matter to us. May we hope a speedy relief by numerous remittances?

WE have received from the author a copy of an address, delivered before the State Homœopathic Medical Society of New York, on "Heredity and the higher duties of the profession," by Dr. Asa S. Couch, of Fredonia, New York, and president of the New York State

Homœopathic Medical Society. It is most excellent, and shows an encouraging evidence of the awakening of scientists to philanthropic and humanitarian questions. One more sign of progress, and one more blessed encouragement to us. One by one co-workers are joining our ranks, and strengthen our cause. We welcome them gratefully.

24 CLINTON PLACE,
NEW YORK, October 18, 1881.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: I have read the October **ALPHA** with great care. Your reply to the article on "Sexual Continence" is excellent; but do you not think in the present passion-striken condition of the world it would do more good to advocate checks and preventions to conception, till a better class of people had grown to a possibility of continent lives. I do; and so continue to recommend and advocate "Diana," as more nearly reaching the needs of the present day.

A few weeks ago I was in company with several elderly ladies, who were discussing married life. Some spoke of their own experience. One was very bitter against men—considered them licentious and selfish in the extreme; her wifely experience had caused that opinion. Another said her married life had been harmonious and delightful; her husband the gentleman and lover still, after many years of married life. Another said: "I had a good husband, but lost him through my own perverseness. I had formed the opinion that we should be continent except as we desired to have children. He did not think so. I had claimed the right to act up to my belief. He naturally formed an attachment for another lady, and we had to separate. I bitterly regretted my folly when it was too late."

It is certain that no one married individual can persist in refusing what, I believe, the Bible calls "due benevolence," without creating a split in the family. Therefore it is all-important that parties contemplating marriage should know each other's views on sexual subjects. But, then, the idea of such discussion *before* marriage!!! Yet divorces are caused by ignorance and deception before marriage.

E. B. B.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Do not ask me to lower the standard of morality! Do not ask me to suppress the truth! As it is given, so must I proclaim. More and more clearly do I see the cause of human woe—of sin, of idiocy, insanity, deformities and disease, mental and physical—to arise from sexual perversion. Could I put this great light under a bushel, just as it begins to illumine the pathway of many inquiring, heroic souls, and advocate anything less than a life of sexual purity and obedience to a higher law than impulse or habit, or even evil inheritance? Though habit may have grown to assimilate nature, and become a second self; for has not our Heavenly Father endowed us with reason, and added the power of "overcoming" all evil, and growing daily nearer and nearer to Him, and all souls can attain to growth, some faster, some slower? The depths of the misery of the human race make the joys of Heaven seem a long way off; but Infinite tenderness has surrounded us with an atmosphere full of light and love.

and peace and joy. All we need is to remove the bandages and scales from our moral vision that ages of ignorant perversion have allowed to accumulate, making light darkness, and turning to pain our highest joy. Are we less likely to aspire, because our object is above us? Do we reach the top of a ladder at one bound? By no means. We must climb step by step, even if the desirable altitude may seem far above us.

The wifely experiences you name are types of womanhood to be found in every community. They are all on the same plane, seeking pleasure as the end and aim of life. Not working to develop a great principle, enduring present pain for a future lasting good. Even the third speaker, who had a glimpse of the truth, could not see she had fought a good fight, nor comfort her soul with the reflection that every blow struck in the right direction tells for the emancipation of humanity. They evidently did not love on the right plane. If they had been filled with a pure, exalted love, founded on an appreciation of each other's character and acquirements, the sacrifice of mere pleasure would not have parted this husband and wife. This is one of the curses of our race—the tendency to submerge the sweet love and halcyon days of courtship into the arena of passion, which so often makes married life a hell. What the world needs is *emancipation* from the tyranny of passion and instinct, and to rise to the sublime heights of reason and divine love. This will not be accomplished one day or hour sooner by compromising the matter or lowering the moral standard by advocating conjugal onanism.

No; our watchword shall be to suffering humanity: Come up higher!

110 NASSAU ST.,
NEW YORK CITY, October 18, 1881.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: I clip the following from the New York *Sun* of to-day :

A HAUL OF WOMEN—105 WOMEN PRISONERS IN THE TOMBS.—One hundred and five women were marched to the Tombs yesterday morning between files of policemen. They were arrested on Sunday afternoon while sitting on doorsteps, sleeping in hallways, or passing along the sidewalks of Baxter, Mott, and Mulberry streets, between Canal and Chatham streets. Policeman Lanigan charged them all with being vagrants, habitual drunkards, and idlers. The ages of the women ranged from 18 to 80. The old women were healthier and less ragged than the younger ones. Mary Maher, whose husband is in prison, carried a boy infant. The child fainted twice in court. The mother and child had been locked up since 3 o'clock on the previous afternoon. Justice Bixby committed the women for terms of imprisonment varying from ten days to six months. As it was deemed dangerous to the health of the prison to have them locked up there, the Commissioners of Charities and Correction sent down all the wagons they could spare, and delayed the Island boat, and by 3 o'clock sixty of the women were on their way to the workhouse. The child was taken forcibly from Mrs. Maher, and will be intrusted to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

I have tried to write some comments on it, but I cannot. It is too vast a subject for me, and as I stood dumb before Axagora, I

must stand here. You, being a woman, may sing the *Miserere* for these; or did a woman voice their woe when Mrs. Browning wrote:

"Breath freezes on my lips to moan:
As one alone, once not alone,
I sit and knock at Nature's door,
Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,
Whose desolated days go on.
"I knock and cry, Undone, undone!
Is there no help, no comfort—none?
No gleaming in the wide wheat plains,
Where others drive their loaded wains?
My vacant days go on, go on."

And must they go on forever?

Yours in hopes of a better by and by,

H. H. BROWN.

We are dumb likewise, and must remain dumb till justice is more evenly meted out between the sexes. As long as the masculine element in humanity claim imperious physical necessity that will not brook restraint, and as long as the weaker and defenceless part of a double crime bear all the obloquy and all the terrible consequences that follow sexual outrages and wrongs, just so long will something bearing the semblance to womanhood be sitting on curbstones, sleeping on doorsteps and areas, and their hearts crying as did the voice heard below—"Stone the woman," while their dumb human lips refuse to utter aught but curses and imprecations, which is the utterance of the demoniac only. Heaven help all such stray sheep, and bring them into the fold of Divine love.

C. B. W.

STONE THE WOMAN.

Yes, stone the woman—let the man go free!
Draw back your skirts, lest they, perchance,
May touch her garments as she passes;
But to him put forth a willing hand
To clasp with his that led her to destruction
And disgrace. Shut up from her the sacred
Ways of toil, that she may no more win an
Honest meal, but ope to him all honorable
Paths where he may win distinction.
Give him fair, pressed-down measures
Of life's sweetest joys. Pass her.
Oh, maiden, with a pure, proud face,
If she puts out a poor, polluted palm,
But lay thy hand in his on bridal day,
And swear to cling to him
With wifely love and tender reverence;
Trust him who led a sister woman
To a fearful fate.

Yes, stone the woman—let the man go free;
Let one soul suffer for the guilt of two—
Is the doctrine of a hurried world.
Too out of breath for holding balances
Where nice distinctions and injustices
Are calmly weighed. But ah, how will it be
On that strange day of final fire and flame,
When men shall stand before the one
True Judge? Shall sex make then
A difference in sin? Shall He,
The searcher of the hidden heart,
In His eternal and divine decree,
Condemn the woman and forgive the man?

—Anonymous.

THE greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution; who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burden cheerfully.

DR. FOOTE'S *Health Monthly*, in its report of the proceedings of a meeting of the Institute of Heredity, in the July issue, says:

"In concluding this report we would add: Probably few who attended the convention would advocate the extreme views of Mrs. Winslow. The majority of those who have given attention to physiology, either as students or medical practitioners, would entirely disagree with her views of the physical advantage to be gained from a life of continence. If one knows of many who live under this rule healthfully and happily, physicians can recall to mind hundreds of cases wherein the usual conjugal relations have restored those who were wasting with mental and physical disease. But Mrs. Dr. Winslow and her coadjutors should have a respectful hearing. Such teachings may do something towards checking the excesses which are so prevalent in conjugal life."

The editor of THE ALPHA sent the following letter, which appears in the October number of Dr. Foote's *Health Monthly*:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 15, 1881.

To THE EDITORS OF DR. FOOTE'S *Health Monthly*.—
Dear Friends: I have desired to write you since reading your July number of *Health Monthly*. But our national calamity, illness in my family and the intense heat, which has well-nigh suspended the world's work, has prevented me up to this moment.

I wish to thank you for your report of the Institute of Heredity meeting in Boston, and your criticism upon my paper from your standpoint. But will you for a moment look at the question from our standpoint and reply to a few interrogations?

1. Did you ever treat a case of sexual or mental disease caused by pure continence, or know of a person losing his health from this cause alone?

2. Do you not find devitalized cases the result of nervous shocks, disappointments, imagination stimulated by novel reading, *wrong instruction* or *no instruction* at all, the want of useful, energizing, attractive employment, stimulants—alcoholic and narcotic—demoralizing dress, and most of all, self-abuse?

3. How many cases have you known, men and women of all ages, that were broken down in body and mind, caused by sexual *excesses* in the married?

4. How many incurable cases have you met with that you have known to have come from the use of *checks* to population? They are *perversions of sexual uses*, and do they not cause derangement of the nervous system, congestions, sterility, impotency, prolapsus, tumors, and all the horrors that come from the perversion and desecration of the most sacred endowments of our person? It has been my experience that these unfortunate persons that have used these injurious devices have soon, one or both, come under medical treatment. I have two such cases under my care now, with shattered nerves, mental depression, almost despair, uterine induration and hypertrophy from repeated congestions, caused by using injections after coition; and a third

whose husband's nerves and digestive organs are wrecked, the result of habitual *incomplete coition*. All along my thirty years' labor in my profession do these cases present themselves.

I am fully persuaded that all these ingenious devices of men are *cheats* and *frauds* and fall under the double condemnation that follows the infringement of moral and physical law.

I believe in the wise use of the sexual organs, for the obvious purpose for which they were created, viz: procreation—the propagation and improvement of our species.

Children are blessings and blessings only when desired, loved, and prepared for as they should be. There will never be too many births under such circumstances, and fifty per cent. less premature deaths, and fifty per cent. less suffering, mental depression or frenzy; and just so much more physical, moral, and intellectual strength to perform the work of human regeneration. Every year I see more and more clearly the observance of the law of continence for the married and single is the door of salvation from disease and death, domestic infidelity, and crime. It is the only cure for the social evil, the only means of effectually stamping out syphilis, scrofula, insanity, and the innumerable cause of wretchedness that afflict mankind.

You think this impracticable—not to be attained. It is very possible and easy comparatively with right thinking and hygienic living and dressing, and the cultivation of a noble ambition for self-control and self-respect, with heart-love reaching out to bless those that by inheritance and untoward circumstances still grope in the darkness.

These are subjects such philanthropists as you should consider. You teach physiological law as a means of salvation, and this is part of your work.

Let me entreat you to give the subject a dispassionate and careful investigation. Light will break upon your soul, and you will be constrained to use your great influence for the spread of the whole truth, and thus becoming God's worker you will cease to prepare measures or give service that will encourage the desecration of God's temple for sensual purposes.

Very truly yours for the purity and best welfare of humanity,

CAROLINE B. WINSLOW.

DR. FOOTE'S REPLY.

We give place this month to a letter from Dr. Caroline B. Winslow, of Washington, a good, enthusiastic and honest worker in sexual reform. In our September issue we published an excellent letter from Mrs. C. B. Whitehead, taking pretty much the same position as that presented by Dr. Winslow. We have indeed several contributors who exhibit a decided leaning to the Alphaite doctrine. And why do we call it the Alphaite doctrine? Because Mrs. Dr. Winslow publishes a paper in Washington called THE ALPHA, in which this doctrine is strongly presented. And what is the Alphaite doctrine? It is that there should be no sexual commerce excepting for the purpose of reproduction, a sort of Shaker notion which does not threaten us with utter extinction.

We, on the other hand, fully believe in animal magnetism, that every living organization generates this force; that there is a sort of individuality in this magnetism; that the interchange of the magnetic forces between persons who are congenial is physically improving and mentally inspiring; that congenial persons of the same sex may benefit each other by social contact, by hand-shaking and agreeable conversation; that the effects of magnetic interchange are more markedly exhibited between two congenial persons of the opposite sex; that this interchange may advantageously take place in ordinary social intercourse, but that the most perfect interchange is induced by that relation so strongly demanded by the natural instincts; that the organs or conductors which nature has provided for this interchange are the most perfect of any for the performance of this function; that when the human family shall come to perfectly understand the wonderful mechanism of these organs and their true uses they will be regarded in a different light from what they now are; that in the infancy of the human family they have been subjected to grave perversions resulting in all kinds of diseases, and seriously interfering with the production of well-balanced and viable offspring. We cannot stop in this argument to give the reasons for believing as we do, nor is it necessary that we should, for in our "Plain Home Talk" embracing "Medical Common Sense," we think we have presented good and sufficient grounds for our belief. If not, we could easily write another volume with any number of new facts which have come under our observation, sustaining our views and which would puzzle any one to account for if we are incorrect in our way of explaining them.

In the present attitude of the human mind, warped by sexual perversion, prejudiced by a conventional morality which would if possible turn the very tide of nature, it is difficult to discuss this subject as freely and understandingly as its merits deserve. Even the Alphaites taking their extreme moral, ascetic ground, are liable to incur the prosecution of the vice societies, while those taking our positions practically stand at the very prison door when presenting what are considered vital truths upon this subject.

With so much by way of introduction we will proceed directly to answer the questions which Mrs. Dr. Winslow has asked. To the first question we emphatically answer yes; hundreds of such cases. Still stranger, many of these cases have been among men. Does not our observing interrogator know that it is a physical law that organs lose their powers by inaction? Does she not know that the muscles become atrophied and weakened by non-use? Is she not aware that all our senses are only preserved by temperate exercise and that they may be destroyed as well by neglect and no exercise as by abuse and over-activity? Does not our intelligent interrogator also know from her observations in medical practice that when the sexual organs are broken down and weakened by continence as well as by abuse, that the mind becomes affected—that the memory is impaired, that the power of mental concentration is lost, that the vigor of the whole nervous organization is in fact impaired? We always find it so in our practice.

We might instance many cases illustrative of the truth of our answer to the first question. It is very difficult, however, to enter into such details in a newspaper article, because it would render it too lengthy, and still more because such details would be deemed exceedingly inappropriate in a periodical issued for general circulation. We will speak of one: We were once called upon by a young minister about thirty-five years of age; a handsome man in his physical proportions and an intellectual looking man in his commanding physiognomy. From protracted continence he had utterly broken down in his sexual system and was impotent. With this impotency came inability to fix his mind upon any subject. He was feeling it incumbent upon him to leave the ministry in consequence of his condition; he called himself a mental wreck. We would like in this connection to quote all that he said in support of his own view of the case that his usefulness had been sacrificed to what he considered to be a sense of duty. No amount of argument could have convinced him that he would have thus broken down had he lived a natural life sexually. Circumstances had prevented marriage, and strong moral convictions forbade any illicit methods of relief. We may add in this connection that we are not infrequently consulted by conscientious widowers who have in from one to ten years of widowhood lost all the natural powers and with them mental balance while all other physical parts seemed to be in perfect physical health and development. Some of them have indeed been fine specimens of the race with a physique strikingly perfect when measured by our present standards.

In answer to the second question we would say that we meet with many such cases, undoubtedly more than of those arising from continence. We are willing to go further and concede that in consequence of the ignorance of the human family in relation to the sexual organs and of the injuries which have accrued to these organs from want of proper instruction there are very few normal subjects. Nearly every man and woman has morbid conditions in this respect which have arisen either from self-injury or from hereditary causes. We are all of us suffering from the sins of our ancestry. Then, some Alphaite will say, perhaps, Doctor, after all we are right, and that the cases you claim to have met with in which continence has proved an injury, the real injury has rather resulted from the acquired or inherited morbid conditions than from the continence which has been superimposed on those conditions. This would have much force except for the absolute self-evident law we have already referred to, that every organ must receive a reasonable amount of exercise to preserve its integrity.

"If," says Prof. E. S. Morse in his lectures on evolution, "conditions bring it about that certain organs or parts of the body become unsound, they finally dwindle and die away." This fact is known to physiologists as well as to scientists generally, who find only the rudiments of organs in animals which have ceased to exercise them.

To the third question we would answer, any number of them; it would be difficult to tell how many. Every physician meets with plenty of wrecks of this descrip-

tion. But it is equally true that marriage with all its mistakes and excesses has saved and prolonged life. Statistics have often been presented to show that married people live longer than celibates; but there is a counter argument which we will not stop to consider now. The figures alone justify the advocates of matrimony in claiming more health and greater longevity for the married. We think that the statistics admit of another explanation. We wish to be candid and therefore stop in our argument to say this. Such statistics, however, cannot count against the natural commerce of the sexes. We cannot spare room for the figures, but they are quite striking.

To question four we answer that we have met with no incurable cases of that description; absolutely none. We have met those who had injured themselves from using objectionable devices and from following improper rules; but we feel sure that discussion on this subject if openly permitted in our medical societies and otherwise, would result in eliminating all the injurious methods. If the profession were to be encouraged, rather than threatened with fines and loss of personal liberty, for devising means to regulate human increase, discoveries would be made far superior to anything that has yet been presented, although there are means which are comparatively free from objection if the physician were at liberty to prescribe them. In consequence of having written freely upon this subject nearly twenty-five years ago, we have had exceptional opportunities of observing the effects of the best methods known under the name of "prudential checks," and we have certainly never met with one single instance where any one was known to have been injured by their use. We have been in consultation with thousands of people upon the subject; have prescribed them in thousands of cases. But when the Vice Society and its agent come in with \$5,000 fine and five years' imprisonment for prescribing such humane devices we are quite willing to take a back seat until the American people are awakened to the outrage perpetrated upon their liberties by a handful of pseudomoralists.

It is our honest opinion that in the past one hundred years more women have been injured by excessive child-bearing than by injurious methods of prevention, omitting, of course, from this category the victims of feticide, for preventionists have no sympathy with abortionists. Comstockism, with its blear-eyed vision and canting morality, makes no distinction, but we feel confident that Dr. Winslow and all other really intelligent people do. Scientists always do.

Much is written by the Alphaites of the reckless waste of such vital material as that entering into the reproductive germ matter of the human family. But all through nature we find the same wastefulness, if it be proper to call it thus, in fructifying matter. It is certainly bountiful, and is thrown broadcast by the flora in the spring of the year; it fills the air during the blossoming period of the fruit trees; it is strewn by the acre along the stagnant ponds which furnish the lower orders of aquatic life with homes; it covers the beds of the ocean; it teems by the millions in the secretions which are emitted by one orgasm of man or brute. Not one fructifying cell

in a million, whether of vegetable or animal life, meets with conditions suited to its development, and consequently to its individual growth. It is true that in the higher orders of animal life it cannot be thrown off from the parent body with impunity except by the methods nature prescribes. Those natural methods are compensative. But those natural methods can only utilize a small percentage of them. With intelligent persons all may be sacrificed as well as so large a part, without injury to health. In any single instance the one-hundredth cell may be rendered unfruitful with no more harm than is experienced in the sacrifice of the ninety and nine.

There is little after the fourth question in Mrs. Winslow's article to criticise; but one word about "the desecration of God's temple for sensual purposes." Has it never occurred to the mind of our ascetic friend that all our enjoyments are sensual? There is not a pleasure that agitates a nerve that is not sensual. Mankind has a habit of speaking of the sexual relation as the only one which is sensual in its character; but the pleasure which we enjoy when listening to the strains of enchanting music is sensual; the pleasure which absorbs our souls when we are viewing a gorgeous sunset is sensual; the delight which takes possession of our intellects when listening to an eloquent sermon or a stirring address is sensual; the emotions which fill the soul of a religious devotee when on his knees he communes with a superior intelligence are sensual; all the enjoyments, all these ecstatic feelings, have their rise in the sensorium. This is the court of last resort; this is the seat of our enjoyments, whether moral, intellectual, or purely physical. We have reaching out of our sensorium numberless nervous filaments seeking for pleasurable excitation, just as the plants have root-fibres radiating in all directions for that which promotes the growth of the plant. It is the agreeable agitation of these which gives us what every human soul hungers for—happiness. Any one, be it preacher, musician, painter, sculptor, dramatist, tailor, dressmaker, cook, man or woman, who can healthfully excite these filaments is a benefactor. It often happens we hit upon injurious means of exciting them, and as we learn from experience or otherwise that in the long run they will blast rather than administer to our happiness, it is to be hoped the human family will drop them. Mrs. Whitehead confounds natural instincts with acquired habits, and speaks of bad practices in eating and drinking as if they could be classified with our perfectly natural functions and healthful desires. She seems to believe that the natural physiological processes may be as easily controlled as an acquired taste for tobacco. She alludes to how dreadfully a smoker feels for a long time after he gives up his injurious habit, and thinks a natural desire created by certain physiological processes might be as heroically subdued by the will as a perverted appetite. What she proposes and what Dr. Winslow urges is continence, except when offspring is wanted. This means for many absolute continence, for there are thousands who cannot have children if they try; millions of others who ought not to have them because they cannot endow them with viable constitutions, or because they cannot obtain the means to properly clothe and educate them. Then when we come to the favored few

who may have offspring, the health of the wife and mother would render it imperative that conception should not take place oftener than once in three or five years.

We confess that the problem presented is a difficult one; but when the ingenuity of man is earnestly turned upon it as it is directed to other questions which are considered more respectable to handle, the problem with all its seeming difficulties will be solved. Mrs. Dr. Winslow, Mrs. C. B. Whitehead, and our contributor who writes about "Holy Marriage," are helping to solve it. What they write will provoke discussion. The need of this article is caused by the people of the Alpha school who have asked the question we have felt bound to answer. In the present temper of the public mind we hesitated to enter upon the discussion; but a stern sense of duty impels us. Our readers have both sides of the question presented—not all that can be said by any means—but some of the prominent points which may be urged by each. Let them judge between us.

REPLY TO DR. FOOTE.

DEAR SIR : Your reply to my first interrogation is quite startling, and makes me think you do not comprehend my meaning. When I ask "Did you ever treat a case of disease caused by *pure* continence, or know of a person losing health from this cause alone?" you reply: "Yes! hundreds of such cases, and many of them were men."

I have reference to the Websterian definition of continence, "content without lawful venery," which condition *never* could create disease of body or mind. Think again, doctor.

Yes, I know that muscles become atrophied from long disuse, and any sense may be obliterated by the same process, continued through successive generations. But this danger is not imminent to mankind. One generation would not be time enough to obliterate generative power. Besides, this power does not depend so much upon muscular action as upon the secretion of semen and the engorgement of vascular and erectile tissues. But it would be hard to prove that *continued* continence ever impaired memory or any mental faculty. On the contrary, when athletes are under training for a prize contest, either rowing, swimming, boxing, racing, singing, oratory, or any muscular or intellectual contest, their trainer forbids any waste of vital force, or the use of stimulants that would be likely to call forth its expression.

Even the case you mention of the handsome, young minister is no proof of the evil results of continence. If so, how did he know himself to be impotent? His health might have suffered from too close application

to study, an improper diet, or too little sleep or exercise. But more probably his sufferings arose from an over-excited imagination, the attentions of his young lady parishioners, or a discontent of mind that he could not marry and a total ignorance of the laws governing sex. His impotency might have made him unable to concentrate his mind. But a pure continence never caused impotency. Strong moral sense, with a knowledge of himself and suitable companionship, would have kept his mind in a cheerful, vigorous state; unless his heredity was unsound.

The continent men and women I have known have been cheerful, buoyant, elastic and playful as in early youth. They were round and plump, with red cheeks and lips and bright eyes, abounding in vitality and animal magnetism, their devotion and faithfulness as husbands and wives were unquestioned, and their conjugal companionship and confidence of the most frank and open character. The best quality of magnetism flows from such vigorous people, making their presence a tonic and a rest; they enrich all with whom they have dealings, and in doing so do not exhaust themselves.

We all suffer more or less from ancestral sins. So much so that few are in a normal state, and the reproductive system, which is the foundation of our existence, has suffered from the sins of fathers and mothers most of all. But science teaches the true use of all the wonderful machinery of the human system, and we know we cannot go very far wrong when we apply its powers to good uses only.

I am glad that you admit the fact of the shocking abuses and awful diseases our race have brought upon themselves and their children in this vain search after pleasure and a desire for unproductive indulgence. Like the apples of Sodom, fair to look upon but full of bitterness and woe. Let us abandon this feverish desire for sex gratification and try the higher and truer life, whose joy never palls nor its sweets turn to ashes in the mouth. Seek for that diviner love that makes us forget self and raises us to our inheritance as the sons and daughters of God. It is not lawful or right to abuse any gift of the soul—music, art, eloquence, the love of the beautiful, or any avenue of enjoyment through the senses. When indulged to excess they become sensual in their abuse, the penalty is swift and sure, feebleness, shattered nerves, and a vacillating mind are the results. But a normal cultivation and exercise makes us happy and well, and they never bring a blush to the cheeks of the most sensitive. Neither should the proper exercise of the reproductive powers, and I am convinced it would not but for the shameful abuse to which they have been subjected.

I do not believe God made the sexes to victimize each other; nor the stronger to prey upon the weaker.

In replying to the second question you admit you know many human wrecks from self-abuse and vain imaginings, and acknowledge the deplorable ignorance of even the most enlightened nations on sexual physiology and heredity. And we concur.

You likewise admit the knowledge of numerous cases of ruined health and happiness from sexual excesses of married couples.

I do not deny the advantage to be derived by every human being from a true, harmonious, chaste marriage, where duty and disinterested affection displaces selfish lust or unlawful indulgence.

I know that the legitimate use of all the functions of the body or endowments of the soul tend to promote happiness, secure sound health and prolong life. But I fear business interests obscured your mental vision and influenced your rejoinder to my fourth query when you say you have met with absolutely no incurable cases from the use of "prudential checks to prevent conception," but have met cases that have injured themselves by using improper rules. As though it were possible for the sensitive and delicate organs of generation to be wrought up to the point of conception and expectancy and then fall back cheated and empty, without results strongly detrimental to health and nervous vigor. This is not possible. It is contrary to the law of life and the reward of good uses. The penalty of violated natural law is swift and sure. But there is no punishment so terrible as that which follows lasciviousness and the perversions of sexual life. No *human* law can divert the misery of the retribution nor give a physician immunity from the evil results to his or her patients by using any device, however ingeniously or skilfully constructed.

An eminent lady physician, for more than thirty years at the head of a popular water-cure, in one of her lectures to her patients, exhibited the prudential checks, uterine pessaries and supporters that she had removed from poor suffering women. They were numerous, and admirable as an evidence of man's ingenuity in devising means to hold up and keep in place "the cradle of humanity" that man's "physical necessities" had battered down. Most gynecologists could make a similar display. But what utter failures they have all proved. For in this department nature will do her own work, and do it perfectly if not interfered with. "Lo, this have I found, that God hath made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions," to the injury of the race. *Desired* maternity to a healthy, intelligent woman, who lives a *true* conjugal life, is not injurious.

Child-bearing is not a disease, but a normal function, and should not injure health or cause more inconvenience than the process of digestion and assimilation. When we follow nature closely, and obey her injunctions, wrecked womanhood will be such a shameful thing that public opinion will demand an investigation.

Again, it will not do to apply the theory of prolific seed-bearing and reckless waste of the fructifying principle of vegetable and lower animals to mankind, or this wastefulness as examples for us to follow.

The seeds of plants encounter many dangers through winds, floods, frosts and being devoured by birds and insects. The eggs of most insects and fishes are impregnated after they are deposited in the beds of shallow streams, and many are lost in the vicissitudes incident to their exposure. But this waste is less apparent as the animal rises in the scale of life and the organization becomes more complicated, beautiful and important. There is less abundant secretion and expenditure, a longer incubation and less frequent reproduction. But they obey their instincts and retain health and perfection. Man has all the instincts of lower organized life with God-like reason added, and many spiritual avenues of legitimate happiness with which to feed his soul, and upon which to expend his vitality, and a shameful thing it is to waste the richest portion of his blood and life-giving powers in lascivious indulgences.

With all the light of reason, culture, science, religious, and moral illumination, is it not time we solved this problem of human suffering and "the little health of women," and turned our ingenuity into a channel that leads to wisdom and strength, or at least not to traffic in human souls and bodies, by making merchandise of their ignorance or wickedness. Would it not be more noble, more Christlike, to teach conservation of vital force with a cheerful obedience to the laws of our being? Then the laws of the land will cease to conflict with us, let them be ever so bad. Even your hated Comstock legislation will be null and void, so far as our work is concerned, and we shall meet no restraint in investigating and teaching true science, the knowledge of which will remove from us all shamefacedness and all guilty consciousness, and we will walk upright before God and man, "with pure hearts and clean hands," which most assuredly we do not now.

One help to this consummation will be the cultivation of a higher love and a purer friendship between the sexes; with a just appreciation of each other's value, and a strong desire for *unconditional* emancipation from the thraldom of passion.

C. B. W.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DIET AS AN ASSISTANCE IN SEXUAL REDEMPTION.

DEAR ALPHA: In your August number, Harrison G. Cole seems, in criticising my "Problem Solved" communication of June, to be a little mixed up about the signification of the text of Scripture which he quotes to show that what a man puts into his physical mouth has nothing to do with his purity of life. Who cannot perceive that the sense of this Scripture has no reference whatever to the material food which merely sustains the body, but pertains entirely in allegory to what goes into the mouth of the mind or spirit, to wit: its perceptions which cannot defile the man, unless those things perceived which are evil come out again in the actions and life of the man, mentioned clearly in the latter part of the Scripture quotation, where it says "these defile the man."

In this allusion, however, I do not wish to convey the other extreme of the idea, that the use of the highest form of food for man, viz.: fruit, grains, and vegetables, will transform a man of low habits and propensities, hereditarily bequeathed to him, into a model type of the race, even if he could live upon them, which I doubt, but I do have the firm conviction, and would spread out the idea as I would scatter seed for the harvest, that there will be no freedom for the spirit to attain to the grand ideal of THE ALPHA, viz.: purity of life in the thoughts of the heart, in severe temptations, and the actions of the life flowing therefrom, until those seeking such entire deliverance shall utterly abstain from the use of animal food and stimulants as articles of diet, for that blinded condition of the spirit which cannot see merely sensual gratification the necessity which requires the murder of inoffensive animals whose bodies are preyed upon for a selfish gratification of taste, cannot lay claim to that liberty which the possession and not profession of the truth will certainly give.

The whole process is obviously unspiritual. I can understand fruits and flowers in Heaven, but I don't expect to find there any correspondence that will take the place of the butcher's shop or the wine cellar.

Though disclaiming any weakness for the dogmatic quotation of Scripture passages, I certainly believe that the profoundest wisdom is manifested in that portion contained in Genesis, chapter i., wherein the Creator is represented as emphatically stating what should constitute the food of man and what the food of animals. "Every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat." No other food is mentioned, which is significant, and must have a deep meaning at such an important time as at the first instructions given to the primal pair. Doubtless the departures from the primal law has made it, to many, an imperative necessity that they shall consume flesh for food, (here comes an example of the law of heredity,) but it can no longer be so when they perceive and cheerfully obey the primal law of the spiritual man which needs and desires only that food for his temporary habitation, the body which God has provided so bountifully in nature, ready for his use without the necessity of his breaking the sixth commandment to obtain it.

Does not our critic manifest a slight moral indisposition in recommending the "weak brother" not to stumble at the liberty he claims to exercise as a non-abstainer by advising him to "conquer by abstinence." This very much reminds me of the advice once given in the old country by a fox-hunting parson at a dinner party with his friends. He familiarly told them "not to do as I do to get to Heaven, but do as I say." To lead the way and show the example to the weak as well as the strong is considered the better way by

EXCELSIOR.

ANAHEIM, CAL., August, 1881.

WYANDOTTE, MICH.

DR. WINSLOW.

MY DEAR LADY: It is a long time since I heard from you, but I think of you very often, and so much wish I could see you. I am very poorly in health, but I am paying only the necessary cost of a priceless treasure. I am now nearly six months on the glorious journey of motherhood, and I doubt if a happier woman lives. I can hardly wait for the time to come when I can nestle closely to my heart what now lies so lovingly beneath it. *Oh! what a joy is desired motherhood!* I wish I could tell my joy in words, but they are too weak. I really feel overshadowed in the same holy way of which we read, and can only find expression in acts of kindness and tenderness towards all who surround me. I only wish the world could know the wondrous spell; there would be no ill-born babes.

The last ALPHA is worth a thousand dollars to every young lady contemplating marriage and motherhood; and that lovely, *lovely* poem, how my very heart thrilled and throbbed louder and louder at each succeeding line. I wish you would send that number to all the names you can get. I am sure it would do good revival work.

Please find inclosed \$9.00—eight new subscribers and a renewal of my own.

How do you like the suggestion of substituting "lady" for all women over 21 years of age, for Miss or Mrs.? I hate the old sign, that tells, upon a simple introduction, our social relations. I think "lady" is very pleasant, refined, and appropriate.

Yours in love and joy,

M. H. P.

TAMAQUA, PA., September 14.

MY DEAR DR. WINSLOW: Thanks for your kind and encouraging letter. You have had my silent sympathy so long, for I know exactly what it means to work in this cause, and now your returning message cheers me. Yes, I shall be *very glad* of THE ALPHA, and will give what I can in the way of contributions. There is no lack of material for thought on this subject, when once one's eyes are opened. I, as a Methodist minister's wife, see the inner side of a great many lives and sorrows.

* * * * *

There are hosts of things to say to you. I have been working almost alone, in this cause, a long time. Some of the correspondence called forth by the "Open Letter" would be interesting, perhaps, for your paper.

Yours most truly,

M. L. GRIFFITH.

TO THE PRES AND THE PUBLIC.

"SPELING REFORM.—English spelng iz the wurst in the wurl. Millionz ov yeerz ar waisted by eech jenerashon in trying to lern it. Thare ar 5,500 000 illiterates reported at the last sensus ov the United States. Millionz ov dollarz ar waisted eech year in printing, riting, and teeching silent letterz. Educatorz and scholarz ar now working for reform. A comitee consisting ov recognized reprezenativz ov our grate univerzityz and our filologial sience haz reported in faivor ov a simplificashon ov English orthografy. Scool Boerdz in England and America ar invitng in petishonz tu Parliament and Congres tu examin intu its praticability. A Speling Reform Assosiashon haz bin organized. Wil you help this important moovement, and begin by riting and printing hav, giv, liv, amiting the silent e? Further informa-hon and paiperz can be had by addressing, with stamp, Eliza B. Burnz, Speling Reform Rooms, New York."

We have received the above appeal, and acknowledging the facts and premises, feel very much inclined to accede to the request. So if our readers find *hav, giv, liv* spelled with three letters only they will not record them as typographical errors.

"IT SHALL RETURN UNTO YOU."

Prayers of love like raindrops fall,
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of our Lord are all
Who suffer like Him in the good they do.

—Whittier.

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